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ABSTRACT

This booklet is a compendium of ideas and suggestions gathered in conferences with public school principals in North Carolina in 1972. Major topics discussed are public information programs and communication with different segments of the educational community, human relations and student discipline, innovative program services, and pupil personnel services. Also included are brief outlines of two presentations made by officials of the State Department of Public Instruction: "Dealing with Concerned Groups" and "Cultural Differences." (JG)

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SUGGESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

Public Information
Human Relations
Program Services
Pupil Personnel Services

1972

Division of Human Relations
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

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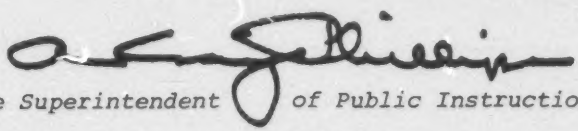
FOREWORD

The purpose of this pamphlet is to share some things with you that were brought up during principals' conferences held across the State last summer. Areas of discussion included public information, human relations, program services, and pupil personnel services.

Many principals have expressed a desire for copies of Gene Causby's remarks on "Dealing with Concerned Groups" and Dudley Flood's remarks on "Cultural Differences." (Gene Causby is Assistant State Superintendent for Personnel Relations and Public Affairs and Dudley Flood is Director of the Division of Human Relations for the Department.) A brief outline of these presentations has been included.

The majority of the ideas expressed in these pages are those of principals. Some of the ideas will be new, and of course, some will be things you have known and used for years. We hope that you will find much of the information useful.



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I. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Why need we, as principals, be concerned? As the name public education indicates, we must rely on the public for money and moral support. With this realization we can assume:

1. information must be distributed
2. the principal will have to do it
3. the principal has a built-in network of communication whether he knows it or not.

The question now rises as to how the network can be used to convey the information most efficiently and correctly.

Some General Rules

1. Make sure communications of any sort are complete, containing answers to what? why? when? and where?
2. When possible provide information concerning an event before it happens.
3. Use the advice of your school-community relations director as much as possible. If your school system does not have one, get together with other principals in your county to try to hire one.
4. Make communication with public and press as two-way as possible.
5. Identify the people you want and need to contact, then take steps to do it. Plan your program, work at it, and evaluate it.
6. Be aware of cultural differences that make some forms of communication more appropriate to certain groups. For example, a full-page ad in a newspaper aimed at ESEA Title I parents may never reach many of them who do not read the newspaper.

Internal Communication

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I. Communicating with Teachers

A. Have frequent faculty meetings for planning and understanding.
   1. Schedule them for a specific time, e.g., the first and third Wednesday of every month from 3:30-4:30.
   2. Have the agenda circulated before the meeting.
   3. Do not do all of the talking; be very aware of having two-way communication.
   4. Do not take a vote on an issue--making decisions is your job.

B. Make sure your procedures and philosophy in the school are well understood by the faculty.

C. Have periodic individualized conferences with teachers (other than when you are handling a discipline problem).

D. Meet informally with teachers, i.e., teas, lunches.

E. Have a handbook for teachers explaining some of your expectations of them; seek their help in its composition.

F. Encourage, in every way possible, teachers to bring their ideas to you.

II. Communicating with Non-Professional Staff

A. Try to make custodial, secretarial, food service, and other non-professional staff members feel that they are part of the "team." Involve them as much as possible.

B. Invite segments of the entire non-professional staff to some of your meetings.

C. Have handbooks for bus drivers, custodians, and food-service staff to explain how they fit into the team and what you expect of them.

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D. Encourage everyone in the school and community to use courtesy titles when addressing the non-professional staff.

III. Communicating with the Students

A. Involve students in working out schedules, handbooks, etc.
B. Have regularly scheduled "rap-sessions" where the students can approach you with problems, discuss your decisions, etc.
C. The school newspaper may be used for communications; a principal's column in which you express your viewpoint can be a helpful addition to the publication.
D. When school clubs invite you to speak, ask a few students to go along or suggest that a school group (such as the choral group, debate club, etc.) be responsible for the entire program.
E. As in all groups, it is especially important that the why's be communicated as well as the what's.

External Communication

IV. Communicating with Parents

A. Set aside a definite hour or more a week to write personal notes of commendation to the parents of children who have recently done something outstanding (made the honor roll for the first time, caught a winning pass, etc.). It is important that a time-slot be set aside for this or it may fall on the wayside of "when I have time."
B. Once a week invite about 16 random parents to come to your office for an hour or so for coffee and information.
C. Have open houses during the day so the parents can get a glimpse of what is actually happening in the classroom.

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D. Mail newsletters to parents if there is information you would like them to get "unadulterated."

V. Communicating with the Community at Large

A. Identify the "publics" (church, civil-action committees, etc.) and make plans to reach them specifically.
B. Leave copies of the school newspaper in dentists' and doctors' offices, beauty and barber shops, pool halls, etc.
C. Invite community leaders to the school for an "inside look" or, if they don't have time, take a slide show to them.
D. Be in close contact and in good relationship with the sheriff and other law officials.
E. Exchange publications and communications with other schools.
F. Use every means possible to have representative leaders in the community visit the school. Some suggestions: scheduled lunches at school, tours, visits to classrooms, etc. Try not to overlook any group.

VI. Dealing with the Mass Media--Radio, Television, Newspaper

A. At the beginning of the school year, invite newsmen in for a dinner or other informal meeting and take a few minutes to let them know some of the overall plans for the coming year. Impress upon them that they should feel free to approach you on any issue that should arise. It is much better to have a responsible authority provide the facts than the "man on the street."
B. Maintain a good working relationship with the press in providing them with bad news as well as good.
C. Be honest with newsmen; they will soon dis-

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cover your attempts to fool them and will consequently lose faith in you.

D. Consult the program director of local radio stations; it may be possible to arrange to have a short program every week for your school. You, your students, or faculty can be responsible for the program.

II. HUMAN RELATIONS

The Human Relations discussions centered around three general areas: discipline, communication, and student involvement. Following is a compilation of some of the principals' ideas.

I. Discipline

A. Procedures for handling discipline should be well established.

1. Written records of disciplinary actions were seen by many principals to be very helpful and necessary.
2. As many parties (the students, his parents, his teachers, the community, etc.) as possible who influence and are influenced by the student should be informed of the discipline decision. (Parents can be especially helpful in the discipline process. It is important that they be made aware of the accurate facts of your discipline problems with their child as early as possible and that they be consulted for their input.)
3. The student should be aware at all times of his status in the disciplinary process.

B. The emotional climate in the office should be as conducive as possible for open communication between all parties concerned. Some means that were suggested:

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1. Convey a sincere interest in finding out the truth.
2. Sit with the students--not behind a desk.
3. Maintain a calm attitude; one that suggests you will be firm and fair.
4. Use eye contact. A wink sometimes helps.
5. Take notes, when appropriate, on what the students, teachers, and other involved parties report.
6. Allow all parties a chance to talk and present "their side."
7. Maintain the authority to restrict the discussion to relevant issues and actions.
8. Appear willing to take the time necessary for coming to a "just interpretation." For instance, you could separate involved students into separate rooms or if the offense is more serious, one might say, "Johnny, you are too upset to be much good in your classes for the rest of the day. The other students have heard about the incident and will be bothering you and I don't have enough information to decide what would be best to do. Suppose I take you home and we can both think about what I ought to do. I'll meet with you (and your parents?) tomorrow morning at 8:00."

C. Obtain as much information as possible from all parties concerned. One might try:
   1. Having both the teacher and the student involved fill out a form that is prepared especially for this purpose and which calls for their individual interpretations of the offense and their individual suggestions as to what should be done about it.
   2. Hand the student a piece of paper and

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ask for his written account.

3. Before the student enters your office, have as much information about him as is available. Such information might be obtained from his permanent record or from currently compiled data concerning his past offenses and past disciplinary actions taken.
4. Call in witnesses from the scene of the offense and hear their accounts.
5. Talk individually with the teacher who brought the student in to obtain her "side."
6. If more than one student is involved, it might be beneficial to hear their accounts individually.

D. It was felt that suspension was not always the best recourse but that it sometimes was the only means left to a principal. Some suggested alternatives were:
   1. To let the student choose from three alternatives you give him.
   2. To let the student prescribe his own punishment.
   3. To assign the student to some maintenance task for a specific period of time.
   4. While the student is in the office and you are listening, have him call his parents and explain what he did.
   5. If the student skipped a class, have him make up every minute after class without credit.
   6. If the charge is fighting, have the two parties eat lunch together for a week or two.
   7. If the student's problem is consistently with one teacher, try transferring him to a different class (internal suspension).

E. Keep records of each disposition.

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1. Some principals have found a "disciplinary file" very helpful: In it is kept a record of the student's name, the offense and the action taken (who was contacted, the punishment, etc.). You have a documented account if any questions arise and a running account of disciplinary cases you have handled. In some cases, the student has been asked to initial the account so he is prevented from discounting it later. This file should be thrown away at graduation.
2. Another more informal way of maintaining records of discipline cases is to keep a dated notebook on your desk, ready to make anectodal notes while the involved parties are reporting. Again, it may be helpful to have the student initial the written account.

F. Follow-up the disposition.
1. Inform the teacher as to what action has been taken with the student. This is best done in person, but, if it is not possible, a note may be written directly to the teacher or on the student's readmittance slip.
2. Inform the parents of your problems with their child before it reaches the stage where they (the parents) must be called into the office.
3. After some action has been taken with a student, inform the parents directly. One method is to have the student call his parents in front of you to explain what has happened.
4. If you are keeping disciplinary files be sure to record the disposition.
5. Make sure the disposition is enacted.

Communication

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A. Non-verbal. Principals communicate by what they do as well as by what they say. The following are suggestions made by principals concerning effective non-verbal communications:
   1. Be accessible in informal situations-such as the cafeteria, athletic field, halls, lunchroom, etc.
   2. Have an "open door" policy. This policy must be visibly demonstrated.
   3. Look students and teachers in the eye when talking and listening.
   4. Come out from behind the desk in your office to sit with students and/or teachers when appropriate.
   5. Be conscious of voice tone.
   6. Glancing at your watch or around the room when talking or listening communicates negatively.

III. PROGRAM SERVICES

Theme: In developing a program for students, we should try to understand the nature of the human being to be taught and the environment he has grown up in. Curriculum should be adjusted accordingly with a look to the future.

If your school is a "factory, a memory bank, a battleground, a morgue, or a monument"* and you want it to be as alive as the bodies in it, how can you change it? You, as a principal, are able to instigate all phases of the change by making the need known, meeting and coordinating interested people, and becoming involved in innovative program change. Following are some techniques principals suggested:

*From "The Child of Crisis" by Jim Hall

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I. Making the need known and creating interest in people.

A. Hold workshops on the necessity for change in today's schools for groups of community leaders, parents, teachers, etc.
B. Collect and make available material relevant to the topic of "today's schools."
C. Provide locations for open community discussions on the topic.
D. Use local newspapers, radio and TV stations, civic clubs, and any other possible medium to circulate relevant issues.
E. Meet with other principals to share ideas and arrange to visit outstanding programs in their schools. Likewise, invite them to see your "model" programs.
F. Take teachers in your school to visit especially outstanding programs over the State.
G. Recognize teachers, students, parents, etc., who bring innovative ideas to you. Be sure to pay them the courtesy of carefully considering their ideas, whether you think they can be adopted or not.
H. Have a suggestion box for teachers, students and interested parties; you will find such an instrument valuable if you treat the suggestions given with respect.

II. Innovative Program Change

Involving, comprehensive, active and relevant are key words in conceiving new programs.

A. Classrooms - new approaches to learning.
1. Mini-courses--nine week or semester courses of a comparative or thematic nature. Some suggested titles were:

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Latest Fiction	Short Story
Black Studies	City Council
Drugs	Ecology
District Court System	Waste Disposal
Jury	Exercise and Health

2. Humanities Courses--combine English, social studies, and art into a two-period class. Team-teaching could be used to insure thorough coverage of the material, i.e., an English teacher a social studies teacher, and an art teacher could work together on the course.
3. In one school an individualized mathematics course was used. Each student proceeded at his own pace. The content of each course was presented in a sequence of LAPS (Learning Activity Packages) prepared by teachers. Each LAP contained a brief introduction, specific behaviorial objectives, suggested learning activities, a trial test, and answers to all suggested exercises and the trial test. Upon receiving a LAP, a student worked through it at his own pace, doing as many of the suggested activities as he felt necessary for him to master the desired objectives. When he decided that he was ready, he was administered a test on that LAP. If he passed the test, he moved into the next LAP. If he failed, he continued to do further work in that LAP until he successfully mastered the objectives.
4. Another program suggested was a social studies course divided into five units in which a comprehensive inter-disciplinary topic was covered. One such

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unit could be "Ecology" for which field trips to local rivers and industries could be used. Economic, social, and political aspects could be covered.

5. Community School--sending students into various parts of the community for study was another suggestion.

B. Extra-Curricular Activities

1. Elimination of club fees was found to be successful in increasing club membership in some schools.
2. Meeting during a class period of the day or during the second half of the lunch period also was found to increase student participation in extra-curricular clubs.
3. Clubs with new names and interests (Ecology Club, Afro-American Club, etc., were tried by many schools and were found to increase interest.

IV. PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

I. What does a program of pupil personnel services mean to students, teachers, and school administrators?

A. The area known as Pupil Personnel Services has been organized to work more effectively with the professional staff responsible for curriculum content. The areas of guidance and counseling, school social services, psychological services, and school health are all within the realm of pupil personnel services.

II. Reaffirming the interdependence of all school personnel who participate in the education process, who are the persons who specifically reciprocate with the pupil personnel services in goal determination, procedures to be used, and ultimate decision making? These co-func-

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tionaries are:

A. The student

Since it is "Student Development" that has been set as the goal of education, the student must be the prime co-functionary of pupil personnel services. The student should know the services available to him so that he might use them effectively. The pupil personnel services staff must always keep in mind that the student is their sole reason for being in education. Through feedback and interaction the student can indicate those services which are meaningful and those which may require evaluation. This constant interaction with students is vital if pupil personnel services are to be sensitive to the needs of individuals and, in turn, translate these needs into effective programs and services in the school.

B. The teacher

The classroom teacher has the potential to be the major source of modification or change in the student. Teachers need help of the type provided by pupil service specialists. If the specialists are to work with persons (teachers and others) important to children, communication is essential -- on a two-way basis. Pupil personnel specialists are an important resource in helping teachers (1) to understand all children better, (2) to improve classroom procedures, (3) to relate information from a variety of sources to curriculum planning, and (4) to planning classroom procedures to meet the needs of individual children. For children with potential or serious problems, pupil service specialists are a key resource in identifying and dealing with those problems.

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C. The administrator
Pupil personnel specialists provide assistance to administrators in a number of areas. Administrators are key people in providing for placement and grouping of children, in planning curriculum development and changes, in the articulation of the various levels of public education, and in administrative steps designed to create a more favorable climate for learning.

D. The parents
Parents are important as users of the services of the various pupil service specialists. Most parents are greatly concerned about their children's development, and anxious to assist in the educational process. Since they presumably know their children better than anyone else, it is important that they be involved in sharing information. Strong parental support and participation is essential to a sound school program for service to children.

E. The community
1. The community environment, in a large sense, has a strong influence on the development of attitudes and cultural understandings among its people, including its students. Because of this powerful influence, the community leadership has an obligation to identify its problems, to work to eradicate unwholesome influences, and to make its many resources available to the school.
2. Pupil personnel services staff must understand the nature and impact of the forces within the community on the lives of its people and institutions. They must actively seek joint participation with the effective community

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leadership toward the resolution of those problems which represent threats to the well-being of the community and its children.

F. Community agencies

1. The scope and depth of school services will meet the needs of most children; however, many children will have problems which will require the services of other community agencies. Through appropriate referrals to these agencies and by sharing of information and interpretation with agency personnel, the pupil personnel staff assist individuals and families in securing necessary help. Pupil personnel workers must maintain a direct and continuous line of communication with the agency personnel and also initiate action for expanded agency service which will facilitate the goals of learning.

III. What is the chief focus of the Division of Pupil Personnel Services in the State Department of Education?

A. The Division of Pupil Personnel Services exists to ensure that the public school system--and each child through the school system--has access as needed to supportive services in relative to physical, social, emotional, and educational development.

IV. What services can the principal expect from the consultants in the Division of Pupil Personnel Services?

A. Consultants provide assistance to individual schools and local education agencies in organizing themselves to either provide or acquire services in:

1. Guidance and Counseling

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2. Social Services
3. Health Services
4. Psychological Services
5. Educational Measurement

V. What is the role of the Task Force on Student Involvement in the Division of Pupil Personnel Services?
   A. The Task Force on Student Involvement assists individual schools and local educational agencies in providing opportunities for students to participate in educational decision making.

DEALING WITH CONCERNED GROUPS - Outline of remarks by Gene Causby, Assistant State Superintendent for Personnel Relations and Public Affairs, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

A. Size - Mass meetings rarely have constructive results. Limit the number of persons to ten or twelve, certainly no more than 20. In this way, more two-way dialogue can be attained. If the concerned group is reluctant to exclude persons, have them choose a spokesman to represent their interest in a formal session.
B. Site - The place of meeting is often a point of contention, but should not be. Meetings with concerned groups do not have to be held in a school. What takes place should not be jeopardized by where it takes place.
C. Preparation - Be prepared. Know who is concerned, and be careful not to underestimate. Try to anticipate what questions will be asked and have the answers ready. Pay special attention to matters dealing with time and money. Pin down dates and times and do not guess at money matters. If you do not know how much

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something will cost, don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." Often someone in the group already knows.

D. The meeting itself - Do not attack the big emotional issue immediately. Find some ground for agreement. One method of doing this is as follows: Ask everyone to agree on the following three things:

Whatever we come up with in this meeting will be:

1. Legal (We must operate within the law)
2. Educationally sound (We're in the education business)
3. Mutually acceptable (It may not be exactly what either of us want but we must both be able to live with it.)

E. Records - Keep accurate, detailed records of what is decided. Make sure all parties have read what is written down and have agreed to the written statement. Also pin down when and how it is to go into effect.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES - Outline of remarks by Dudley Flood, Director, Division of Human Relations Department of Public Instruction

A. Communications is a basis for forming relationships.
   1. The starting point of any kind of relationship between people may begin with an understanding of the setting in which relationships grow or fail to grow.
   2. We must constantly be aware of barriers to good, positive relationships. These barriers may exist before we begin the process of communicating.

B. For clarity, identification, and ease in conceptualizing things and people, we tend

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to categorize them and inadvertantly assign them characteristics. These characteristics often serve as indicators of how we will address ourselves to a given category of things or people.

1. Very often the assignment of characteristics is based on irrelevant data, inconsequential data, lack of knowledge, lack of information, and lack of having had experience in dealing with people and things first hand.
2. Information gaps cause us to make assignments and to classify and categorize on the basis of superficial information.
3. Categorizations of this nature can inhibit meaningful, personal relationships between people and thus cause them not to know each other.

C. In serving as a basis for relationships, communications has at least four tenents, each of which is equally important: a message must be sent, the message must be received, the message must be understood, and some kind of relationship must be established.

1. Communications is important in terms of the relationships that exist between teacher and student, teacher and principal, school and community.
2. Messages should be formulated on the basis of prior knowledge about the person to whom the message is being sent.
3. Communications must be transmitted in the language of the listener.
4. Individuals sending messages should consider how the message will be heard by the listener.
5. Individuals should also be aware that <u>what is not said</u> is often the greatest

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form of communication.

D. In order that cultural differences may not interfere with the communications process and meaningful relationships can be formed individuals should:
   1. Begin to learn all they can about people, particularly about those who are different in any respect. Communications based on misinformation, lack of information, or on minor bits of information almost always result in forming false premises.
   2. Base conclusions about people who are different on experiences, not projections.
   3. Be sure that effort produces positive results. Many well-intentioned people lose their perspective while trying to improve a situation.
   4. Identify and deal with people as individuals.